

## **Making A Difference at Work**

Air Dates: September 25-29, 2023

### **Day One**

What difference are you making where you work? You may recall that in his inaugural speech, President Kennedy made this now famous statement: “Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country.” So instead of asking: “What difference does my work make?” ask instead, “What difference can I make at work?”

When you approach your everyday work with the attitude of what you can give instead of what can you get, it will make a significant difference in your effectiveness on the job. And it will make a difference in your effectiveness as a representative of Jesus Christ.

Some time ago I was introduced to a website called [wildaboutwork.com](http://wildaboutwork.com) and found some really good thoughts there. With the permission of the author, Curt, I’m using some of his ideas this week.

As Christ-followers, we must continually remind ourselves that every part of our lives is sacred. There are no secular/sacred categories for us. As I’ve often said, for a disciple of Jesus Christ, working in what we would classify as a secular organization should be as sacred as working in a church or becoming a missionary. Our calling should be as clear as any of those who we classify as being in “full time Christian service.” It’s unfortunate that this terminology is used because it simply is not biblical. Every believer is in full time Christian service—or should be.

Therefore, we definitely should have a different attitude toward our work and our coworkers and our employers. And we should approach our work each day with this attitude of “what difference can I make today?”

So, your first challenge is to make sure you go to work each day with the right attitude. I know that’s not always easy to do because you work in some difficult situations. But as a believer, you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength, and I suggest you start each day asking God for an attitude adjustment. I have no doubt that if you daily ask God to give you the right attitude toward your work and ask him to give you a desire to make a difference, he will do it.

### **Day Two**

I’m challenging you—and myself—to begin each workday asking what you can do to make a positive difference where you work.

There are any number of ways you can do this: in the way you work, in the quality of your work effort, and of course, in your interactions with the people you work with and for. Let’s think of some practical ways you could make a difference, no matter where you work. You can make a difference by adding something positive or eliminating something negative.

The first and most important way you make a difference is by your very demeanor. Do you show up at work in negative mode, complaining too often, criticizing too much? That’s a negative that can be eliminated. So, first, you can show up each day in positive mode, with a smile on your face, greeting people in a friendly way, and keeping your words out of negative territory.

And that applies, even if you're working from home. You still have to show up, right? And the mood you are in shows up in your emails or on Zoom or Microsoft Teams – or however you connect with co-workers. Attitudes generally surface and complaining and griping attitudes come through rather clearly.

I think many times we are more negative than we realize. So, here's a suggestion: Determine for just one day that you will not say anything negative all day long. Set that as your goal—to get through one entire day without being negative. Pray about it at the beginning of your day and ask God to help you remember not to say anything negative all day. If you do that, you may be surprised to see how many times you begin a negative comment, and you have to stop in the middle of your sentence.

Then go the extra mile and determine what you can do to put something positive in your day at work. More smiles, encouraging emails, respectful responses, sincere compliments—there are so many ways to make a positive difference. You just have to remember to do it.

### Day Three

What could you do to help your organization save money? Now, if you're not personally in charge of the finances of your organization, you may not think about ways to save money. But believe me, everyone needs to do a better job of cutting unnecessary expenses.

From something as small as turning off lights when you don't need them, to conserving paper, to reducing phone bills or travel expenses, it makes a difference when everyone watches the bottom line. All too often employees have an attitude of taking advantage of the company and getting some financial benefit for themselves. Just imagine how unique it would be to have an employee who simply does what she or he can do to eliminate unnecessary expenses, finds less expensive ways to do things, or more economical sources. It would make a difference.

Are there some ways you could help your fellow coworkers who may be dealing with some negative situations? Some extra-mile effort might make a big difference—something like pitching in to help them meet a deadline or showing them some new skills or easier ways to do things. I know that I frequently need help with my computer. I use it constantly yet I have very poor understanding of how it works! So, when someone takes the time to dig me out of one of my technical problems, it is much appreciated!

So, eliminating negatives is a great way to make a difference where you work. Then adding something positive is equally important. Don't underestimate the impact that small things make—things like remembering birthdays or anniversaries, finding ways to have small celebrations. Recently someone sent out a reminder that our church receptionist was celebrating twenty-five years of service to the church. What fun it was to celebrate her and give her a little gift to say how much we appreciate her.

Making a difference at work should be a hallmark of a Christian, but we have to be intentional about it. So I hope you'll give it some thought.

### Day Four

Are you making a difference where you work? You and I should be making positive differences where we work, don't you think? I'm talking about extra-mile efforts that truly help the organization function better in some way or another.

Does your organization have any kind of volunteer program where employees can be a part of some good charitable project? Many companies are more attuned to that these days, but if yours isn't, why couldn't you suggest or start something? I find that people really want to help others, but they just don't know how to get involved. Offer a suggestion, and they'll usually want to help. For example, you could

have a food drive for a homeless shelter or a food bank. Or you could suggest visiting a nursing home once a month just to cheer up the residents.

The Boy Scouts have a motto that says, “Leave it better than you found it.” Just suppose all of us had that attitude toward our everyday work. From cleaning up messes and keeping the place looking nice, to improving the quality of your work effort and coming up with ways to do a better job, if we each intentionally tried to leave our workplace each day better than we found it, how much nicer would our jobs be? How much easier would it be to come to work each day?

I know that not everyone will share your enthusiasm for making a difference where you work, and furthermore, not everyone will appreciate your efforts. But that should not matter especially if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. You have the privilege and the responsibility of doing everything you do as under the Lord.

*Ephesians 6:7-8: Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.*

Our calling as Christ-followers is to make a difference in every situation—because we are working for Jesus. I want to do that and I’m sure you do too.

## Day Five

Throughout the thirty-nine plus years I have been broadcasting, my deepest desire and prayer has been that I could somehow inspire Christians in the marketplace to see their jobs as their calling—as the place God has them to be a light in a dark world. I know that many of you have that attitude and I’ve heard so many of your stories of how God is using you to make a difference where you work.

Over time, asking what difference you can make while you’re at work can become a habitual question—a way of life. It becomes automatic, so that instead of having a defeatist attitude, you look at every situation from the perspective of what you can do to make a difference.

But it won’t just happen. We each have to be intentional about it on a daily basis, and we need to be motivated by love of God and love of people—the two things Jesus told us we need to do, love God and love people. This kind of attitude comes through prayer and the power of God’s Spirit residing in us. But the incredibly good news is, as disciples of Jesus Christ we have both the motivation and the power to make a difference.

And it just so happens that when we work as unto the Lord, it also reduces our stress, brings us joy and fulfillment, and makes our daily lives meaningful and worthwhile. It’s a win-win way to live. You just can’t go wrong living the way God designed you to live.

*Colossians 3:23-24: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*